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International cataloguing tradition and Italian rules: common ground and specific features

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Foreword

Several countries believing in international cooperation have long ago taken to sharing their cataloguing principles, re-examined their national traditions and tried to harmonize their codes. This tradition, started by the 1961 Paris International Conference on Cataloguing Principles (ICCP), first with its *Statement of Principles*, then with the construction of new national codes, continues and becomes stronger and stricter. A need is felt to redesign those principles with features more suitable to the new technological and international environment and a will to assert firmly that the highest principle is the convenience of the users of the catalogue. This paper will present briefly the main activities aimed at a revision of the Italian code – *Regole italiane di catalogazione per autori* (RICA) – and how it is influenced by the international debate.

1. The Italian tradition

In 1869, soon after the unification of Italy, the Commissione Cibrario² recommends, in its final report, for every library to have a general inventory, an author/title catalogue and a subject catalogue. It also suggests that “in order to insure [...] uniformity in the construction of these catalogues, each librarian will state special rules to be followed by the staff assigned to compiling and copying them. For the fulfilment of this task it recommends librarians to consult Panizzi’s rules for the printed catalogue of the British Museum, *Letture di Bibliologia* by Tommaso Gar, the handbooks on librarianship by Petzholdt, Seizinger and Edwards as well as the most important printed catalogues by Brunet, Graesse etc.”.³

The first complete Italian code of rules was written by Giuseppe Fumagalli and it was based on his own experience and on the in-house code in use at the National Library in Florence. It was

¹ The article was planned together by both the authors, who agree on the whole content. Nevertheless, Carlo Bianchini is responsible for paragraphs 1, while Mauro Guerrini is responsible for paragraphs 2.

² The Commissione Cibrario, officially known as “Commission on the scientific and disciplinary reorganization of the libraries in the kingdom”, was instituted by the Ministry for Learning by the 20 July 1869 decree law, its task was to investigate the state of library services in Italy and to write a report whose outcome was the 24 November Royal Decree, that, among other things, reorganized library services, established a new staff, classified libraries and fixed the rules for admission to the training schools for librarians as well as the subjects in the curricula”. See ATTILIO MAURO CAPRONI, “Virginia Carini Dainotti e il tema della formazione dei bibliotecari” in *Bollettino AIB*, vol. 39, n. 4 (dec. 1999), p. 436-442.

³ GIOVANNI GALLI, *Regole italiane di catalogazione per autori tra Ottocento e Novecento*, Milano, Editrice Bibliografica, 1989, p. 49.

published in *Cataloghi di biblioteca e indici bibliografici*,⁴ and it was awarded a prize by the Ministry. The gratifying verdict voiced by the judging committee is confirmed by the later debate in which this work is considered an unavoidable touchstone.⁵ Fumagalli wrote: “The alphabetical author catalogue [...] is no doubt the most useful one in a library [...] because] it informs, as quickly as possible, *if a given book is in the library*, and where it is but it also provides the materials for studies in bio-bibliography; that is, it tells us *which works the library has by a given author and which editions of a given book*.”⁶ The excerpt shows that Fumagalli had learned well Cutter’s lesson, so much so that he fixes the principles of the author/title catalogue in the same terms in which they will be stated, over seventy five years later, in the Paris Principles.⁷

The first Italian rules for descriptive cataloguing on a national scale go back to 1922, when a special Commission is established whose members are the heads of two honoured libraries (Guido Biagi, chair, and Giuliano Bonazzi), a supervisor from the ministry and a university professor; its task is to analyze the rules in use in many Italian libraries and to construct a code, with the similar Anglo-American code as model, to put in force in all Italian state libraries. When the special commission ends its works a decree law ratifies and divulges the first national cataloguing code *Regole per la compilazione del catalogo alfabetico* (Roma: Nardecchia, 1922). The code mirrors the need for uniformity, at the national level, of the alphabetical catalogue, and for an end of the many local solutions, mainly of a practical nature; its success is proved by its large application even outside the range of the state libraries it was devised for.⁸

The 1922 rules, when put to use, under the supervision of Giuliano Bonazzi, in the retrospective cataloguing of the bibliographic materials in the Rome library “Vittorio Emanuele II” show gaps stemming from two classes of problems: 1) some rules allow for subjective interpretation; 2) some bibliographic cases are not to be found in any of the provided rules.

As far back as 1940 these shortcomings suggest the need for a revision or even a remaking of the 1922 rules, so a Commission of experts is appointed but its works are interrupted by World War II.

In January 1951, on the spur of the just started union catalogue of Italian libraries, a new commission⁹ resumes the revision with two basic objectives: 1) “to attune, as far as possible, the Italian rules to a type of international entry that may allow a foreigner to find easily the books searched in the alphabetical list of our catalogues,” 2) “to rid the code of the dissimilarities and contradictions already found in it, to search for other ones, to broaden the rules according to a number of case studies greatly increased in twenty years of usage, in some cases to modify the form of the rules in order to make them less concise and more comprehensive and expansive and, most of all, to increase the number of examples making them fit for the current times”.

During its works the Commission keeps in mind the 1949 ALA Code, the rules adopted in the Belgian and German libraries and the 1939 rules of the Vatican Library realizing “sometimes with real satisfaction, that the construction of some of these rules adopted in foreign countries was motivated by the corresponding rules in the Italian code”.¹⁰

⁴ GIUSEPPE FUMAGALLI, *Cataloghi di biblioteca e indici bibliografici. Memoria di Giuseppe Fumagalli [...] premiata dal Ministero della istruzione pubblica nel 1° Concorso bibliografico*, Firenze, Sansoni, 1887.

⁵ GIOVANNI GALLI, *Regole ...*, cit., p. 59.

⁶ GIUSEPPE FUMAGALLI, *Cataloghi di biblioteca ...*, cit., p. 116-117.

⁷ Galli remarks on the work of the famous Italian librarian: “*Cataloghi di biblioteca* is much more than a code to construct catalogues. If we agree that this activity is the heart of librarianship, we can state that the work by Fumagalli represents the start of the Italian librarianship not for its prescriptive content but for the way it organizes issues for its overall view of the object.” (GIOVANNI GALLI, *Regole ...*, cit., p. 75).

⁸ The rules were organized as follows: Chap. I. On the catalogue and the entries; Chap. II. Entry word; Chap. III. The content of the entry; Chap. IV. Spelling and conventional signs. Appendix I. Incunabula.

⁹ The commission is made up of: Ettore Apollonj, chair; Nella Santovito Vichi, referent; Fernanda Ascarelli, Francesco Barberi, Marcella Bozza Mariani, Maria Marchetti, Emerenziana Vaccaro Sofia.

¹⁰ *Regole per la compilazione del catalogo alfabetico per autori nelle biblioteche italiane*, Roma, Fratelli Palombi, 1956, p. XI [from now onwards 1965]. The rules are signed by the commission members: Ettore Apollonj, chair; Nella Santovito Vichi, referent; Fernanda Ascarelli, Francesco Barberi, Marcella Bozza Mariani, Maria Marchetti, Emerenziana Vaccaro Sofia.

The new cataloguing code, though it changes the rules in the 1922 code in many points, retains its structure;¹¹ in fact it neither increases nor decreases the number of rules. When we compare it to the 1922 code the most relevant changes are:

“works written even by two authors only, each one of whom wrote a clearly distinct and openly stated part, are to be entered as anonymous works with analytical entries for both authors (rule 18);
in publications for weddings, graduations or veil-taking etc, refer from the names of the persons being celebrated (rule 19);
for works accompanied by a critical essay with its own title and sometimes in a separate volume, an analytical entry is made from the critical essay (rule 28);
for opera librettos refer from the title and the musician (rule 32);
for collections of writings taken from works by two or three authors, the main entry is made for the first and analytical entries or reference entries are made for the others (rule 33);
a collection of inscriptions made by an author as a single and limited work that later becomes the starting point for a large collective publication, must have a separate entry under its collection title (rule 34);
translations from various authors are treated according to case study, like collections or like works by different authors (rule 36);
rules and examples have been introduced for antipopes and patriarchs (rule 44), and for the wives of sovereigns (rule 45);
the rule for sovereigns who wrote in various languages has been changed, or rather, inverted, the entries for the works by heads of state in the Renaissance and by Roman emperors have been regulated (rule 45).”¹²

One last important change concerns the rules for corporate bodies: “the various forms of the name of academies and societies appear each one under its own denomination and not all under the last name; the various denominations are gathered in a chronological order in a general explanatory entry located before the group of entries with the last denomination (rule 65)”.¹³

Let’s note a peculiar detail, it is the use, ahead of the Paris Principles, of the phrase “main entry” which is made up, besides the entry word, of four elements: 1) title; 2) imprint; 3) bibliographical notes; 4) special notes.¹⁴

The element of novelty introduced by the 1961 Paris Conference is no doubt the main reason behind the revision leading to the publication of RICA in 1979. When the Italian delegation in Paris came back to Italy, it was convinced the 1956 text had to be revised. Diego Maltese, from the National Central Library in Florence, backed the importance of an overall rethinking of the Italian code to bring it to a “consistent system of basic, clearly stated principles”.¹⁵ The Italian code – though with a tradition going back to Cutter¹⁶ and enriched with contributions by Fumagalli, Chilovi and Biagi –

¹¹ Yet, some appendixes are added to the 1922 index: Appendix II. Geographical prints. Appendix III. Prints and Engravings. Appendix IV. Music. Appendix V. Transliterations. Appendix VI Abbreviations. Appendix VII Entry Arrangement. Analytical Index.

¹² 1956 Rules, p. XII-XIII.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ The 1956 Rules have a *Chapter I On the catalogue and the entries* that made up a sort of glossary since it gave definitions for the basic concepts in the code. (i.e. Catalogue, alphabetical author catalogue, Entry, Entry word, Author, Anonymous works, Title, etc.). The entries were classified as *main entries*, “the ones with a full description of a work”, *analytical entries*, “the ones for writings joined to another work or inside polygraphic collections”, see also references, “the ones that link a secondary author or title to the author or title in the main entry” *see references* “the ones that simply refer from the form of an entry word to another”. See the 1956 Rules, p. 1 e 2. See also RICA 139.

¹⁵ See DIEGO MALTESE, “Contributo alla revisione delle Regole italiane di catalogazione per autori” in *Accademie e biblioteche d’Italia*, year 33, n. 4-5 (July-Oct. 1965), p. 283.

¹⁶ See DIEGO MALTESE, “I principi internazionali di catalogazione” in *Accademie e biblioteche d’Italia*, year 30, n. 5-6 (Sept.-Dec. 1962), p. 258-269, particularly p. 268-269.

needs a complete harmonization of the rules, that is, a close examination of each rule (according to Lubetzky's model) that can relate it to a principle justifying its presence.

In 1962 at the XIX Congress of the Italian Library Association, "the suitability of drawing up a new edition of the rules" founded on the Paris Principles is recognized; a debate begins on the librarianship journals and in 1968 a ministerial Commission is appointed.¹⁷

The theoretical foundations of the new cataloguing code had been stated earlier by Maltese in 1965 with the publication of "Principi di catalogazione e regole italiane", then in 1966 in the work "Elementi di catalogazione per autori. Scelta e forma dell'intestazione".¹⁸ Reviewing the former, Carlo Revelli, co-leader in the debate on the new principles and on the revision of the Italian rules, wrote: "In Italy the times are ripe for a radical revision of the rules for descriptive cataloguing [...] bringing us into line] with the revision movement taking place almost everywhere. [...] I can't see any better starting point than this work by Maltese, that deserves due consideration."¹⁹

The latter contribution by Maltese stresses the need to set apart the problems linked with the choice of headings and the ones linked with the form of it, thus setting the basis for a division that will represent the structural innovation of the new code.

Maltese's commitment in the design of the new code based on the Paris Principles and his "on principle" plan appears in a letter he wrote to A.H. Chaplin after the publication of the provisional edition of the comments to the Paris Principles. Maltese remembers that "as early as the Rome session of the IFLA council [...], I voiced my doubts about the expediency of an 'official' comment to the Paris Principles; by experience I also advised against the unavoidable fallacy of examples [...]. I don't want to say that the Anglo-American code will not carry considerable weight in cataloguing practices all over the world (the ALA code carried it too), but what use was it, then, constructing principles, what use our thinking in preparation for them, let's say, from Osborn to Lubetzky (and to Chaplin), if certain compromising, perhaps inevitable, solutions take their place and are fully sanctioned?" Arthur Hugh Chaplin reaffirms the concept that principles are international but languages are national; principles must be suited for culture and national language, for local realities.

The *ad hoc* ministerial Commission – Rule-Commission – was instituted in 1968;²⁰ as its members kept their jobs, they met only when possible. Much of the work was carried out by mail and Maltese, who was the chairman, shouldered the burden of collecting and abstracting the papers so that they could discuss on a partially shared basis when they met. In April 1969, to confirm the strictly theoretical plan intended for the work, Revelli wrote to Maltese: "Dropping rules based on case study in favour of rules based on general principles forces the cataloguer to give up a *forma mentis* that tends to subdivide works by category of publication, with the outcome that, with the growth of categories, solutions become more and more entangled". The proposal tends to get rid of adherence to laws and cases, according to the suggestions by Osborn and Lubetzky, even though this implies a conflict at every step between adherence to the Italian rules and obedience to the Paris Principles. The most strongly debated issues are:

¹⁷ The events taking place between the approval of the Paris Principles and RICA are presented in MAURO GUERRINI, "Il dibattito in Italia sulle norme di catalogazione per autore dalla Conferenza di Parigi alle RICA" in ID., *Riflessioni su principi, standard, regole e applicazioni. Saggi di storia, teoria e tecnica della catalogazione*, Udine, Forum, 1999, p. 45-92.

¹⁸ DIEGO MALTESE, "Elementi di catalogazione per autori. Scelta e forma dell'intestazione" in *Accademie e biblioteche d'Italia*, year 34, n. 4 (July-Aug. 1966), p. 209-223. ID., *Principi di catalogazione e regole italiane*, Firenze, Olschki, 1965.

¹⁹ CARLO REVELLI, Review in *Bollettino d'informazioni. Associazione italiana biblioteche*, year 6, n. 1 (Jan.-feb. 1966), p. 23-32.

²⁰ The Commission members are Francesco Barberi (chair), Diego Maltese (referent), Carola Ferrari, Carlo Revelli, Maria Valenti, Angela Vinay e Giovannella Golisano (secretary); later two external like universities and libraries members were added: Maria Califano e Simonetta Nicolini.

- “1. *Choice and form of headings*. The rules introduce the division between choice and form of heading (not of entry-word) already but not systematically present in the 1956 rules.
2. *Name of author*. The Commission introduces a break in the Italian tradition that tended to a careful search for the author’s register name; it considers and accepts also the name on the document since it is the one looked for and preferred by the reader or by some readers.
3. *Jurisdictions*. The rules drop the heading under bodies that are organs of governing-territorial jurisdictions in favour of a heading directly under the superior body which they are organs of. The rules keep the headings under those bodies – universities and libraries – that are not decentralized or peripheral organs of jurisdictions.
4. *Description*. The Commission gives much prominence to description – that is one of the great novelties in the new code – even more so than the rules for choice and form of heading, that have always been issues treated in rules on author cataloguing. Description has a specific chapter, analogous with the space allotted to this subject by the 1967 AACR. The Commission takes its start from a previous, rather generic, normative situation, but it can rely on the experience at BNI that has provided for an in-house descriptive code borrowed from the Library of Congress praxis (use of paragraphs, tracings, etc.)”.²¹

In its research and synthesis works the Commission “paid particular attention to developments and new solutions to cataloguing issues worldwide. First the Anglo-American cataloguing rules then the German ones were carefully studied but perhaps the Commission appreciated best the documents worked out by the IFLA Cataloguing Committee, especially ISBD (M) *International Standard Bibliographic Description for Monographic Publications*, the standard for descriptive rules, yet without forgetting the Italian tradition.”²²

Besides a general reorganisation of the structure of the code (“as a distribution of the discipline according to old criteria looked unfeasible”²³), a first relevant novelty introduced by RICA was the concept of *the author presented as the main one*, that is, the author presented on the title page as prominent above the other authors in collective works. The rule implies that in these cases the choice of heading falls on a given entity, not by means of an analysis of the relationship between the entity and the work, but on merely formal criteria (or rather, the form in which the information appears in the *manifestation*). Another change introduced – also regarding the choice of heading – is the suppression of paragraph 18, comma 3: “according to it a work written jointly was always entered under the title when the parts of the single authors appeared separate even if the authors were fewer than four. This rule, anyway, was a much debated innovation if compared with the 1921 rules.”²⁴

The decision to prefer entry under title for collections of texts by various authors was an attempt to reconcile the Paris Principles and the Italian tradition, thus reading in a more limiting sense the words in section 10.3 of the Principles. The analysis of the concept of work and of its logical and consistent use in RICA made by Alberto Petrucciani, points out that the terms work, publication and edition are used inaccurately as quasi-synonyms although they are not at all such.²⁵

The most interesting paragraphs on choice of heading are the ones about works by corporate bodies. The Paris Principles talk about “entries under corporate bodies”, a wording, adopted in spite of opposition to entry under corporate bodies strongly voiced by some participants, it was avoided calling them “authors” exactly to satisfy them. In the RICA introductory *Report* the treatment of corporate bodies is defined “the most sensitive of all issues in descriptive cataloguing. The 1956 rules, according to the Commission, are especially unsatisfactory because they accept the principle

²¹ MAURO GUERRINI, “Il dibattito in Italia ...”, cit., p. 70.

²² *Regole italiane di catalogazione per autori*, Roma, ICCU, 1979, [from now onwards RICA], p. VIII.

²³ RICA, p. IX.

²⁴ RICA, p. XI.

²⁵ ALBERTO PETRUCCIANI, *Struttura delle norme di scelta dell'intestazione: le RICA e i nuovi modelli di analisi*, 2002, available on line at: <http://www.iccu.sbn.it/>.

of corporate bodies as authors but lack a definition for corporate body and for body as author, “so that every cataloguer had a personal idea of what collective authorship under a corporate body might mean”.²⁶

The Italian tradition stands out for its recourse to the concept of “corporate body author” already used in the in-house rules in use in 1881 at the National Central Library in Florence. Retaining the concept of “corporate body author” RICA moved away from the content of the Paris Principles. “Therefore, the solution in RICA is outside the choice mandated by the Paris Principles about the treatment of corporate bodies even though the prescriptions look consistent and reaffirm the tradition recorded within the in-house rule at the National in Florence since 1881 and rule 49 in *Cataloghi di biblioteche e indici bibliografici* by Giuseppe Fumagalli”.²⁷

Regarding the form of heading, the need to ensure that an author is uniformly identified and qualified when it is strictly necessary to distinguish him/her from another author, suggests as a general rule, to make the form of heading match “the one chosen by the author for his/her own publications, or the one by which the author is best known. It is the solution of the problem following the adoption of a uniform heading that is, to fix the unique and univocal form of name and of title, so that all manifestations of an author’s works are collocated in one point in the catalogue (the second function of the catalogue, stated at 2.2a of the Paris Principles). The problem is divided into three points:

- 1) which name or which title to use;
- 2) which form of the name or which form of the title to use, choosing either a fuller or a less complete form;
- 3) only for personal authors with a name made up of more than one word, which entry-word to adopt, that is, which access element to put first, choosing either a direct form or some inversion or rotation of terms.²⁸

The general criterion proposed at point 7 of the Paris Principles points to the name (or form of name) or title most frequently used in the original editions of the works or, if this principle cannot be applied, in references to them in accepted authorities. From a full reading of points 7 and 8 of the Paris Principles we can infer that the choice must fall on “*the name most frequently used in the original language* of the catalogued works. This solution implies collating the editions in the original language of the works – not directly, of course, but by means of accepted authorities – to establish and adopt the most recurrent form with the possibility of adopting a form based on translations only if the original language is not used in the catalogue.

Point 8.21 introduces yet another exception – the form that has become established in general usage – which makes for three, not always agreeing, rather, often antithetical, criteria for adopting a uniform heading:

- 1) the form by which the author is most frequently identified in editions of his works, even though it is difficult to establish and therefore the principle may vary from one library to another;
- 2) the form recurring in critical and reference works; and

²⁶ RICA, p. XII.

²⁷ MAURO GUERRINI, “Ente autore? Un concetto assente dai Principi di Parigi”, box inside ID., “Il trattamento catalografico degli enti collettivi dalla Conferenza di Parigi (1961) al First IFLA Meeting of Experts on an International Cataloguing Code (2003)”, collaboration by Pino Buizza and Lucia Sardo, in *Biblioteche oggi*, year 21, n. 10 (Dec. 2003), p. 40; the full essay is on pages 37-53.

²⁸ MAURO GUERRINI, PINO BUIZZA, “Il controllo del punto di accesso alla registrazione per autore e titolo. Riflessioni sul comportamento delle principali agenzie bibliografiche nazionali a quarant’anni dai Principi di Parigi”; Paper presented at the workshop sponsored by ICCU, “Catalogazione e controllo di autorità, Giornate di studio”, Rome, 21-22 novembre 2002. published in English as background paper, available on line at the IME ICC site: http://www.ddb.de/news/ilfa_conf_index.htm; presented in Spanish too at the 2004 Buenos Aires IME ICC2.

3) the form established in general usage.

Almost forty five years later the *Paris Principles*, we may notice that we got a positive result in the part about the choice of heading but not in the one about its form; for the latter each code followed its particular course, mostly retaining its local tradition.²⁹

Going back to RICA, the Commission, although in its closing session, voices the wish that “others will go on and construct rules for special materials, and that a comment will be started on the rules themselves, that might become a useful aid”. A commission to revise and update RICA was delayed until 1996 when the October 1996 Decree law officially appointed the “Commission for updating and eventually simplifying the rules for constructing the alphabetic catalogue in Italian libraries” a title that echoes the words for the 1956 rules, not for the 1979 ones.

2. The activities of the Commissione RICA, and the debate in Italy between international perspectives

The Commission – commonly called Commissione RICA – is appointed in order to “re-examine analytically the text of the Italian rules for descriptive cataloguing and to check, over twenty years after publication, whether they actually conform to the evolution of cataloguing praxis around the world, to the electronic environment in which we now work and to the new types of materials ever more present in our libraries”.³⁰ Therefore it is clear that the activities in the Commission will take place on two levels, proceeding simultaneously: an international level and a national level, with a constant eye on real conformity to the electronic environment. The Commission stated as its target a thorough study of: 1) the rationale for a possible re-writing of the code; 2) the effectiveness of the *Paris Principles*; 3) the need to update terminology and examples; 4) whether RICA can be used for other types of materials”.³¹

The Commission begins an analysis, ended in 1997, according to which it considers substantially valid the *Paris Principles* that are the foundation of RICA. It also sees fit to broaden and develop the text of RICA taking into account standards and documents produced internationally: ISBD, *Guidelines for Authority Records and References*, FRBR, FRANAR o FRAR, ISO Norms. The paramount aim of the revision is to harmonize the rules to the changed context of the organization of the catalogue, following the use of electronic technology, in the presence of new physical formats and different access modes, to the development of shared cataloguing and the implementation of cataloguing levels of varying complexity. After a first pause for rethinking offered by the workshop *La catalogazione verso il futuro*,³² the Commission stated that the *Paris Principles* are still the basic principles, although as early as 1998 various cataloguing agencies had spoken in favour of replacing them and in the same year IFLA published *FRBR Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records*, offering a new approach to the analysis of the bibliographic record. The course does not change in the two last years, when ICCU takes part officially in the Frankfurt IME ICC meeting and translates the text of the *International Cataloguing Principles* that begins focusing on the need to overcome the *Paris Principles* and replace them with new principles: “Over forty years later, having a common set of international cataloguing principles has become even more desirable as cataloguers and their clients use OPACs (Online Public Access Catalogues) around the world. Now, at the beginning of the 21 century an effort has been made by

²⁹ MAURO GUERRINI, “La lingua del catalogo. Sulla forma del nome degli autori greci, latini, dell’oriente antico, del periodo medievale e umanistico, dei papi e dei santi”, in ID., *Il catalogo di qualità*, Firenze, Regione Toscana Giunta Regionale, Pagnini e Martinelli, 2002, p. 51-85.

³⁰ See <http://www.iccu.sbn.it/ricacom.html>.

³¹ Ibid.

³² ICCU, *La catalogazione verso il futuro : normative, accessi, costi : Atti del seminario Roma, 13 marzo 1998*, Roma, ICCU, 1998.

IFLA to adapt the Paris Principles to objectives that are applicable to online library catalogues and beyond. The first of these objectives is to serve the convenience of the users of the catalogue. The new principles replace and broaden the Paris Principles and form an entry to all aspects of the bibliographic and authority records used in library catalogue”.³³

On the assumption that the Paris Principles are still valid, the Commissione RICA deems it necessary to make gradual changes in the codes, that may tend to harmonize rather than to re-write; the codes should envisage the possibility of “varying levels of cataloguing, even if a minimum amount of data and needed information must be retained”,³⁴ and provide explanations on controversial issues: treatment of corporate bodies, form of transliterated names, the concept of intellectual responsibility, retrieval function versus bibliographic function, form of access, terminology and abbreviations. In 2004, the Commissione RICA, on the basis of these guidelines, publishes a document on the form of heading for personal authors. A draft is handed out at the beginning of 2004 for a preliminary verification and to gather the opinions of the library community on the proposed text. On November 13 2004 an important answer is prepared by the AIB Commission on Cataloguing and Indexing. A new version, updated to December 21 2004 is published by ICCU, it looks more substantial and better defined and motivated (available at http://www.iccu.sbn.it/PDF/Forma_intestazione_Autore_personale.pdf).

The Commission sticks to the principle of setting the rules into a logical progressive and consistent order, putting first a general rule on uniform heading followed by the rules on personal names and names of corporate bodies.

The main controversial issues in this draft deal with: 1) separate “bibliographic identities” for the same person, 2) the preference between the original forms and forms in the language of the catalogue, and 3) keeping or dropping rules on categories and traditional exceptions.³⁵

On point 1 the Commissione RICA decided to retain the solution of the Paris Principles adopted by RICA, according to it “a person, even when he/she changes name or uses different names in diverse occasions or for works of different genre, is always represented by one heading ”.³⁶ The Commission considers bibliographic identities unfeasible and that, theoretically, the concept of separate “bibliographic identities” seems inconsistent”.³⁷

Point 2 in the proposed draft “states again the solution adopted by the Paris Principles and RICA: according to it a uniform heading is normally based on the original form of the name, the one used in the publications in the original language rather than in translations or adaptations that may exist in the language of the catalogue or in a preferred ‘common’ language (Latin for the ancient and Medieval world, English in some cases nowadays).” The Commission, although it recognizes the choice operated, after Paris too, by AACR and by the Spanish code, as well as “the trend to give preference to translated or adapted forms that may seem more convenient for readers who have the use of translations, [...] also noticed that the trend towards a multicultural and intercultural society and the increasing global availability online of bibliographic data should purport an increased preference for the original form”. On point 3 the target has been to reduce exceptions or “to drop minor exceptions and to gather similar issues, so as to get a simpler, clearer and more consistent picture”.³⁸

³³ See the Italian translation at the ICCU site: http://www.iccu.sbn.it/PDF/Traduzione_Principi.pdf.

³⁴ CRISTINA MAGLIANO, “La Commissione RICA e la sua attività”, 21 November 2002, available on line at: <http://www.iccu.sbn.it/ricaaf.html>.

³⁵ These themes had been dealt with and debated critically in MAURO GUERRINI, *Riflessioni su principi, standard, regole e applicazioni*, cit. and in ID., *Il catalogo di qualità*, cit., two collections of essays previously published in several journals.

³⁶ Commissione RICA, *Intestazione uniforme – Persone (testo aggiornato al 21 dicembre 2004)*, p. 1, available online at: http://www.iccu.sbn.it/PDF/Forma_intestazione_Autore_personale.pdf.

³⁷ MAURO GUERRINI, PINO BUIZZA, “Il controllo del punto di accesso alla registrazione per autore e titolo”, cit. hold the same opinion.

³⁸ Ibid.

Besides the workshop on “Cataloguing towards the future” there were two other important occasions for a debate on cataloguing rules: the AIB meetings in Genoa (1998) and Rome (1999). The Genoa Meeting represents a turning point; in a session openly devoted to *Il codice desiderato* [*The wished code*],³⁹ several scholars declared their will to modify RICA because the code needs updating as asked and hoped for by the Commission itself at the end of its sessions, and in order to make it more adequate to the new evolving national and international context. In Rome a full session is devoted to *La revisione dei codici di catalogazione: un punto di vista europeo* [*The revision of the cataloguing codes: a European point of view*],⁴⁰ with the objective of discussing a question that is fundamental, as for many European countries, especially the ones in central Europe, the revision of the Italian code presents a threefold option:

- 1) to construct a new code (but, on what principles?);
- 2) to translate the Anglo-American code (and to adopt it *sic et simpliciter*?);
- 3) to graft the national tradition, if it exists, on to the roots of AACR2 (as the Spaniards did in 1995).⁴¹

The debate on the revision of the various national codes and the attention paid to the international situation have never lagged in Italy, on the contrary, some clues might make us see a sort of international parallel tradition, beginning in the eighties. In those years AIB promotes the translation and dissemination of ISBD *International Standard of Bibliographic Description*,⁴² the standard takes roots largely in our libraries thanks to the great number of training courses carried out in that period. The widespread knowledge of ISBD causes the progressive but inevitable substitution ((*de facto*, never officially admitted) of RICA *Parte III. Descrizione* by the appropriate ISBD.⁴³

In 1997 we have AACR2R translated into Italian;⁴⁴ at the same time cataloguing terminology is studied carefully, most of all when translating IFLA standards and Dewey, so that new concepts may be rendered correctly; this brings important innovative changes into the Italian professional vocabulary. This fact regards a relevant part of the history of library science (cataloguing?) yet to be analyzed and described. In recent years Italy has constantly taken part in international meetings, showing a slow, tireless and qualified increase in its contribution to the theoretical debate which has a twofold aspect: direct participation in international seats with papers presented at IFLA meetings, and essays published in scholarly journals like *Cataloging & classification quarterly* – a journal that recently published the proceedings of the 2003 conference on authority control in Florence⁴⁵ –

³⁹ See MAURO GUERRINI, “Il codice desiderato. Verso RICA? : evoluzione o rivoluzione?”, in: *AIB 98. Atti del XLIV Congresso nazionale dell'Associazione italiana biblioteche, Genova, 28-30 aprile 1998*, by Fernanda Canepa and Graziano Ruffini, Roma, Associazione italiana biblioteche, 2001, p. 216-218; also available on line at: <http://www.aib.it/aib/congr/co98rica.htm>

⁴⁰ See *AIB 99. Atti del XLV Congresso nazionale dell'Associazione italiana biblioteche, Roma, 16-19 maggio 1999*, by Enzo Frustaci and Mauro Guerrini, Roma, Associazione italiana biblioteche, 2001; also available online at: <http://www.aib.it/aib/congr/co99index.htm>.

⁴¹ MAURO GUERRINI, “La revisione dei codici di catalogazione: un punto di vista europeo. Nota introduttiva”, in: *AIB 99*, cit., p. 82-83; also available on line at: <http://www.aib.it/aib/congr/co99guerrini.htm>.

⁴² For ISBD translated into Italian, by AIB and later by ICCU, see <http://www.ifla.org/VI/3/nd1/isbdital.htm>.

⁴³ See Istituto centrale per il catalogo unico delle biblioteche italiane e per le informazioni bibliografiche, *Guida alla catalogazione nell'ambito del Servizio bibliotecario nazionale*, Roma, ICCU, 1987. The 1995 second edition is titled: *Guida alla catalogazione in SBN. Pubblicazioni monografiche, pubblicazioni in serie*. See the other guides published by ICCU and by other institutions..

⁴⁴ *Regole di catalogazione angloamericane : seconda edizione, revisione del 1988*, redatte sotto la direzione del Joint steering committee for revision of AACR: the American Library Association, the Australian Committee on Cataloguing, the British Library, the Canadian Committee on Cataloguing, the Library Association, the Library of Congress, a cura di Michael Gorman e Paul W. Winkler. Edizione italiana a cura di Rossella Dini e Luigi Crocetti, Milano, Editrice Bibliografica, [1997].

⁴⁵ *Authority control in organizing and accessing information: definition and international experience*. Part I [and] Part II, Arlene G. Taylor, Barbara B. Tillett, guest editors, with the assistance of Mauro Guerrini and Murtha Baca, in

and the debate on the same issues in meetings organized by universities, ICCU, AIB and other institutions, with the participation of some Italian scholars in the preparation of the draft and then in the revision of the text of the international cataloguing principles (IME ICC).

After the publication of FRBR, for instance, the AIB study group on cataloguing published an important contribution,⁴⁶ – valued at an international level – and the Commissione RICA published a study: *L'applicazione del modello FRBR ai cataloghi: problemi generali e di impiego normativo*.⁴⁷ The essay by Isa De Pinedo and Alberto Petrucciani titled *Un approccio all'applicazione del modello FRBR alle regole di catalogazione italiane: problemi e possibili soluzioni*, started a national debate on the possible use of FRBR in the construction of the Italian code, several Italian scholars took part in this debate.⁴⁸

The prompt dissemination of the new model provided by FRBR was due both to the translation of the *Report* by ICCU and to the presence of a favourable ground open to novelties, no doubt thanks to the diffusion all over Italy of SBN (the National Library Service) in which the entity/relationship model was developed from the start in a consistent and convincing way. AIB has contributed in this sense, its cataloguing and indexing section has produced a document that studies the draft handed out by the Commissione RICA.⁴⁹ The document presents some important general observations followed by specific comments on each proposed rule. The AIB Cataloguing and indexing section points out a serious critical problem in the general structure of the study by the Commissione RICA. The draft on the form of personal name cites FRBR and the revision work by IME ICC; however, the continuous, repeated reference to the Paris Principles motivated by the RICA tradition, does not make clear what the relationship is between the layout of the future Italian code and the principles under completion at the international level. Since IME ICC is preparing a document that, according to its editors, will fully replace the Paris Principles, it is not clear what the relationship will be between the draft by the Commissione RICA and the construction of the new principles.

In other words, there is a risk that the new Italian code, when published, will be already old, obsolete because still “unwavering”, founded on the Paris Principles, if its editors do not take into due consideration the replacement of the Paris Principles by the ones that will be probably titled IFLA Cataloguing Principles. Furthermore, the new Italian code should study better the peculiar features of the electronic catalogue and the online environment in which catalogues operate nowadays also with regard to the recognition of the electronic medium as preferred form for the creation of catalogues as well as the relationship between entities and the resulting structure of data. Of course, the fact that we are dealing with a draft, that up to now the analysis has been limited to a single feature – uniform heading - persons – that the layout of the code should follow a structure that makes it insert the general purport rules at the beginning, suggest a temporary softening of our judgement of substantial distance from the international context and to put it off to when the complete draft is available. Anyway, we want to highlight at least two far from irrelevant issues:

- 1) the stance taken by the Commissione RICA on “multiple bibliographic identities” can be fully accepted, particularly in the light of the Italian bibliographic tradition. Yet, We cannot hide that the principle contradicts itself in the case of collective pseudonyms (the *see* reference from the personal name to the collective pseudonym for co-authored works is *de facto* a recognition of a different bibliographic identity),

“Cataloguing & classification quarterly”, vol. 38, nos. 3-4 (2004); vol. 39, nos. 1-2 (2004); also published as a monograph: New York, The Haworth Information Press, [2004]; the Italian version is edited by Mauro Guerrini and Barbara B. Tillett, with cooperation by Lucia Sardo, [Firenze], Firenze University Press; [Roma], Associazione italiana biblioteche, 2003).

⁴⁶ AIB. GRUPPO DI STUDIO SULLA CATALOGAZIONE, “Osservazioni su Functional requirements for bibliographic records : final report”, *Bollettino AIB*, vol. 39, n. 3 (Sept. 1999), p. 303-311.

⁴⁷ Cfr. <http://www.iccu.sbn.it/PDF/rica-frbr.pdf>. [sic].

⁴⁸ See CARLO GHILLI, MAURO GUERRINI, ANTONELLA NOVELLI, “FRBR: analisi del record e nuovi codici di catalogazione”, *Bollettino AIB*, 43 (2002), 2 (June), p. 145-159.

⁴⁹ See <http://www.aib.it/aib/commiss/catal/rica01.htm>.

- 2) With regard to the form of name there are two possible approaches that are antithetical but forced to coexist: the original form of name and common usage. RICA, AACR2 and other codes show they have the problem in their minds. According to the AIB Cataloguing and Indexing Commission it must be admitted that “the original form is, on the whole, to be preferred because it seems philologically the most correct solution and because for modern authors it widely corresponds to the linguistic usage prevailing in western countries (it is the name by which the author is known in the language of the bibliographic agency). Yet, it may be inappropriate to make the use of the original form absolutely mandatory, enlarging its range to cases in which it does not correspond to linguistic usage”. In fact, if we consider only one approach to form in a peculiar way, we risk creating solutions hard to share, like suggesting as original form a transliterated form or forcing the user to know the original form of Confucius or Averhoës in old Chinese or in Arabic.

Even more so, who will look for a work published in Japan or in Egypt, but also in Norway or Denmark, if it has been indexed under its original name? Under what name are geographical areas indexed since an authority record is the same in a search by author and in one by subject? We must not forget, with regard to this, the attempts by IFLA – not so back in time as to deserve oblivion – for names of corporate bodies (*Form and Structure of Corporate Headings* – FSCH, 1980) and for names of persons (*Names of persons*): “The activity for names of persons is carried out with a totally different point of view. IFLA decides not to normalize or, rather, not to give general guidelines on how to treat names of persons in the cataloguing rules, but to collect and codify the [existing] bibliographic custom”. The outcome is that two publications “have similar objectives but are carried out following different notions. *Form and Structure of Corporate Headings* (FSCH) represents an international agreement edited by experts in the field. *Names of persons* enumerates national practices regarding the structure of personal names. Both methods chosen to make the documents can be admissible but obviously the results are not uniform”.⁵⁰

The document by the AIB Cataloguing and Indexing Commission goes on: “In the choice between original form and linguistic usage, adopting the latter as preferred standard would lead, in many cases, to the use of the original form as preferred form but it would offer the advantage of avoiding the use of made-up or artificial forms (like the transliterated ones, particularly from non-alphabetic scripts, e.g.. Japanese), or wholly imputed to a very specialized context, therefore alien to the linguistic and literary habits of most users of the catalogue”.⁵¹ On the other hand the founding element of the new principles is to serve the convenience of the user who speaks the vernacular and in whose favour it seems not only useful but also proper to give preference to common usage rather than to original form.

Conclusions

In conclusion, we may notice that, on the whole, the development of the Italian rules gets into a tradition that has long been able to sum up both the international achievements and the local specificity, with a few contradictions. After the publication of RICA (1979), a break in it was motivated by lack of a permanent committee for their revision; now we are trying to make up for it, not without delays and gaps. The objective is a code that can fit into the deep and safe channel of international cooperation and reconcile the local tradition with the need to harmonize with the international code of reference represented by AACR2. We consider the solution by the Spanish rules a very good one, before them only Eva Verona had succeeded in this harmonization in the Slavic code.

⁵⁰ MAURO GUERRINI, LUCIA SARDO, *Authority control*, Roma, Associazione italiana biblioteche, 2003, p. 38.

⁵¹ Commissione, p. 3.